

10-Year Chair Of Safety Honored At Spring Meeting

BY LEEANN MATON

For Bob Smith, promoting safety in the construction industry isn't just a good idea, it's a duty.

"There's a moral obligation you have to promote a safe work site," said Smith (right) at the Spring Meeting.

Smith, who describes himself as "passionate about safety," is the Safety Director of the Levy Company, where he's worked since 1992.

He also acted as chairman of the Builders Association's Safety Committee for ten years. As he received an award from Association Chairman John Russell for his accomplishments with the Safety Committee, he praised the contractors awarded for their commitment to safe workplaces, but cautioned them to remain vigilant of the "moral responsibility."

"Judging by the number of award winners here, we've done a good job," Smith said to those assembled, including representatives from the 25 companies who earned Builders Association Safety Awards for demonstrating strong safety practices in 2008. "It's an ongoing battle, but we're preaching to the choir."

However, Smith was concerned with the "too many people who aren't here, who don't get it," as he put it. "What we have in this room is the potential to make safety even more important, to take it to the next level."

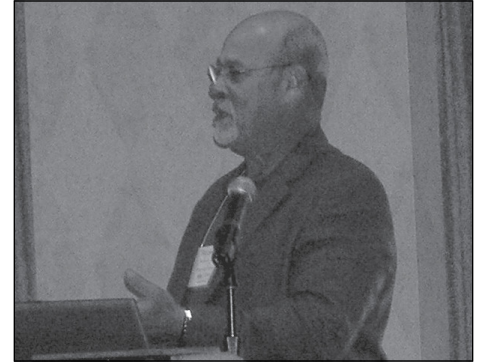
As Safety Chair, Smith helped to institute contractor safety forums, which bring together association members four times a year for a roundtable discussion. The collaborative environment allows companies to learn from peers about how to handle safety problems, with the goal of implementing the best and safest practices across the industry.

According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, around 1,200 construction industry workers suffered fatal occupational injuries in 2007.

The census also found that although this number had declined slightly from the year before, construction still caused the most fatalities of any private sector industry, and that workplace deaths in the subsector of building construction rose 11 percent from 2006.

Smith stressed that contractors need to get into the habit of mentoring and training their colleagues, coworkers and peers in order to promote safety in order to make a difference on the industry. He helped start one such program – the Builders Association's Safety Partnership with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The partnership allows member contractors to avoid fines for minor OSHA violations found on a job site, as long as



the violation is resolved right away. It's also defined by Bronze, Silver and Gold levels of membership, encouraging already strong safety programs to improve.

The Partnership has grown from nine companies to 21. Smith takes pride in the fact that the Partnership established cooperative ties with the goal of making construction sites safer places to work.

"You've got to think of OSHA as your friend," Smith said at the meeting. "They have the exact goal we do – to keep people from getting hurt."

Safety Award Winners, 2008

Best of Class Award

Bulley & Andrews, LLC (Over 500,000 work hours)
Climatep, Inc. (250,001-500,000 work hours)
Ryan Companies US, Inc. (70,000-250,000 work hours)
William J. Scown Building Company (Less than 70,000 work hours)
Custom Contracting, Ltd. (Most Improved)

Safety Recognition Award

Airtite Contractors, Inc.
Case Foundation Company
Continental Electrical Construction Company, LLC
Falk PLI Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
Frank H. Stowell & Sons
Glenn H. Johnson Construction Company
Grove Masonry Maintenance
Joseph J. Duffy Company
Lawdensky Construction Company
The Lombard Company
McShane Construction Company
Monson-Nicholas
Pepper Construction Company
Tessler Construction Company, Inc.
Thatcher Foundations, Inc.
Tyler Lane Construction
Ujamaa Construction, Inc.
Valenti Builders, Inc.
W.B. Olson, Inc.
W.E. O'Neil Construction Company